

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

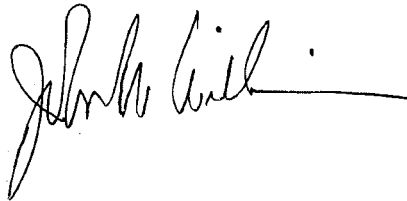
Farm Service Agency
Washington DC 20250

Notice PM-2391

For: FSA Federal and County Employees

2004 Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program (CFP)

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Program Announcement

HRD, Training and Development Branch (TDB) is accepting nominations for the FY 2004 CFP sponsored by the USDA Graduate School.

The USDA Graduate School Career Development Programs Division in 1996 established the Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program. CFP is a developmental program that offers both a 12-month and a 6-month session that gives senior-level federal personnel at the **GS/GM 13-15 or equivalent grade level** the opportunity to work with Congress. The selectees will gain an in-depth understanding of the legislative processes of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Assignments. Placements are available in both the Senate and House of Representatives, in Members' offices and on the staff of a congressional committee.

Special seminars. Throughout their assignment Fellows attend special seminars on current political and legislative issues.

Credit option. The University of Southern California's Washington Public Affairs Center offers participants who complete the fellowship program the opportunity for graduate credit.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2004	FSA Federal and County employees; State Offices relay to County Offices, 1 to each Federal County Office employee

1 Overview (Continued)

A Program Announcement (Continued)

The Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program includes the following components:

- **Congressional Assignment** - benefits both the Congressional office and the employee
- **Orientation** - mandatory intensive 2-week training provided in January 2004 for 6-month and 1-year Fellowships
- **Special Seminars** - Graduate School staff will conduct educational developmental seminars for the Fellows throughout their assignments
- **Mentoring** - a senior faculty member will serve as a mentor to provide support and guidance during the fellowship.

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- information about the nomination and selection processes for CFP
- a description of CFP.

Notes: Participants will be **away from their positions for the duration of the long-term training program**. Carefully consider these time requirements with your first-line supervisor **before** submitting a nomination package.

Assignments typically run January through July for the 6-month Fellowship, and January through December for the 1-year Fellowship.

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice, contact Regina Duncan, HRD, TDB at 202-418-9053.

2 Nomination Process

A Nominee Qualifications

Nominees for the program must:

- be full-time, permanent Federal and county employees
- be at the GS/GM 13 through GS-15 level or equivalent level
- be interested in an in-depth knowledge of legislative branch processes and culture
- have the ability to work independently with minimum supervision
- be willing to explore new ways of working to achieve results
- have demonstrated flexibility in work habits.

B Nomination Procedure

Eligible employees may apply for the program by submitting a nomination package containing the following:

- completed AD-2015 (Exhibit 1), including supervisory signature (**mandatory**)

Notes: Union officials on 100 percent official time do not need supervisory concurrence and signature.

The nomination form is available from the FFAS Employee Online Forms Website at <http://165.221.16.90/DAM/ffasforms/forms.html>.

- written statement of up to 2 pages addressing how the following abilities or competencies are supported in your current position
 - leadership
 - initiative
 - interpersonal communication (people skills)
 - oral communication
 - written communication
 - technical competence.

Note: When providing written statements, address each ability or competency individually.

- current OF-612, SF-171, **or** resume signed and dated by the applicant with current home address
- list of all formal training courses taken in the last 5 years

2 Nomination Process (Continued)

B Nomination Procedure (Continued)

- a statement written by **the applicant** outlining how the fellowship will benefit him or her and the agency
- a statement **written and signed by the first-line or the appropriate Agency official** outlining how the fellowship will benefit them and the agency.

Note: The statement should also assess the applicant's potential and need for this training and development experience.

Note: Do **not** submit a completed SF-182 until the nominee is notified of selection for CFP.

Only employees who follow the nomination procedures in this notice will be considered for selection to participate in this program. **Do not apply directly to the USDA Graduate School.** FedEx all nomination packages to Regina Duncan.

C Where to Send Nomination Package

Because of major mail delays, send the **original and 3 copies** of the completed nomination package using FedEx to the following address:

REGINA DUNCAN
USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
SUITE 303-A
2101 L STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20037-1526.

Note: FAXed copies of nomination packages will **not** be accepted.

D Deadline

All nominations must be **received** in HRD, TDB by **COB December 2 2003**. Nominations received after this date will not be considered. Substitution of nomination items will not be permitted after the deadline.

3 Selection Process

A Participants

FSA may support **1 slot** for **either** the 1-year session **or** the 6-month session.

B Participant Selection

Participants will be selected as follows.

HRD, TDB specialist will assemble an Assessment Panel consisting of at least 2 members who occupy positions at a grade level not lower than the full performance level of the Long Term Training Program (LTTP) being filled. There will be an EEO (nonvoting) observer present and there may be a union (nonvoting) representative observing during this process.

C Panel Membership

The Assessment Panel:

- will review and rank employee nominations using criteria established Agency-wide for LTTP's
- has the final responsibility for determining best qualified candidates based on valid LTTP related criteria and employee's application package.

Note: The Assessment Panel refers best-qualified candidates to the Administrator or designee for approval for the allotted number of spaces approved. **No panel will be held if the number of nominations received does not exceed the number of slots available.**

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) This agency provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.

The work of candidates while on official time, performing labor relations representational functions, must be viewed with neutrality.

D Labor Management Obligation

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes. Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

3 Selection Process (Continued)

E Program Costs

Tuition for the 2004 CFP is:

- \$3,600 for the 6-month session
- \$5,050 for the 1-year session

Notes: Tuition, travel, lodging costs, and per diem for FSA Federal employees and non-Federal County Office employees shall be coded to the employee's originating office. Upon notification that candidates have been selected, the originating office may request an increase in their travel allotment consistent with the travel costs associated with participation in CFP. Requests shall be submitted to the FSA Budget Division.

Tuition should be charged to the Federal employee's and non-Federal County Office employee's originating office. Requests for additional non-Federal County Office tuition shall also be submitted to the FSA Budget Division.

Upon notification that a non-Federal County Office employee has been selected, SF-182's should no longer have an appropriation/fund in block 21. SF-182, block 21 should read "**COF Employee**". The tuition costs associated with the training should be paid through the originating office's county non-payroll administrative funding allotment. This change will alleviate the possibility of duplicate payments.

F Accommodation

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this training should contact Regina Duncan at 202-418-9053 or TDD at 202-418-9107.

Note: Some accommodation services, such as a sign language interpreter, require at least 3 days notice to schedule.

G Selection Notification

HRD, TDB will notify employees whose names are forwarded to the USDA Graduate School for consideration. The USDA Graduate School will send selectees written notification of their acceptance.

Notice PM-2391

AD-2015, 2004 Congressional Fellows Program Nomination Form

This form is available electronically.

AD-2015
(11-18-03)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

FY 2004 GRADUATE SCHOOL, USDA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM NOMINATION FORM

NOTE: Deadline - Completed Nomination Package must be received in the Training and Development Branch by Tuesday, December 2, 2003

1. All State Employees please indicate State and County: STATE: COUNTY:		2. Applicant Applying for: (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> 6-month program <input type="checkbox"/> 12-month program	
3A. Applicant's Name and Home Address (Include Zip Code)		4A. Division/Staff (Include Office Address and Zip Code)	
3B. Home Telephone No. (Include Area Code)		4B. Work Telephone No. (Include Area Code)	
6. Title of Present Position		7A. Grade (GS or CO and Grade)	
		7B. Are you a Career Employee? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Please notify your supervisor that you are submitting your name for consideration of the training listed above. Have your supervisor sign below to indicate that they have been notified. Travel/lodging costs will be funded by the employee's office travel budget. NOTE: Union officials on 100% official time do not need supervisory concurrence and signature.			
9A. Supervisor Print Name		9B. Supervisor's Signature	
9D. State Executive Director Print Name (Required for all FSA State and County Federal and Non-Federal Employees)		9E. State Executive Director's Signature	
		9C. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	
		9F. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	

10. Other required information to be included with this nomination form:

- A statement **written and signed by the first-line or the appropriate Agency official** outlining how the fellowship will benefit them and their agency. The statement should also assess the applicant's potential and need for this training and development experience.
- Provide a written statement of up to 2 pages addressing how the following abilities or competencies are supported in your current position (Note: When providing the written statements, address the following abilities or competencies individually):
 - Leadership
 - Initiative
 - Interpersonal Communications (People Skills)
 - Oral Communication
 - Written Communication
 - Technical Competence
- Current OF-612 or SF-171 or resume signed and dated by the applicant with current home address.
- List of all formal training courses taken in the last 5 years.
- A statement written **by the applicant** outlining how the fellowship will benefit them and their agency.

Please submit this nomination form and information listed in Items 10A through 10E including the original and three (3) copies. All completed nomination packages must be received in the Training and Development Branch by Tuesday, December 2, 2003.

10. Please send the original and three (3) copies of the completed nomination package using either of the methods listed below:

If sending by Regular U.S. Mail, send to:

Regina Duncan
USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
STOP 0574
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-0574

TELEPHONE: 202-418-9053

OR

If sending by Special Delivery, hand carry or FEDEX, send to:

Regina Duncan
USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
2101 L. Street, NW, Suite 303-A
Washington, DC 20037-1526

TELEPHONE: 202-418-9053

NOTE: FAXED COPIES ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.